VICTORIES WORSE THAN DEFEAT

Me, taking a sunbath

Welcome to the very first issue of *Victories Worse Than Defeat*! This is a new fanzine that will focus on the Android based game console Ouya - and the wonderful world that surrounds it. My name is Starfighter Johansson and I am in no way affiliated with the Ouya Team or in other ways an official "Ouya person" of any kind. I am just a regular guy (well, we'll see about that one) with a burning passion for creating things like magazines, music and pretty things in general.

This fanzine came to life during a moment of weakness. I didn't like what I read about Ouya, everywhere I looked it was just article after article about how the console was inferior in comparison to similar products and how the Ouya Team should act in the future to establish a strong brand. I am not a big fan of speculation and I am not a professional at predicting the outcomes of projects. What I am here for is the fun. I want to play games, laugh and tinker with the cool little cube we call Ouya. So when there was an apparant loss of this viewpoint I figured "why not write a thing or two myself?".

At first I thought an Ouya blog would be the right way to go considering this day and age, but as a person with roots in the punk scene I have always favored the fanzine as *the* form of media. My budget nowadays is non-existing so I had to go with this e-format - something that certainly benefit the readers as in this form I can keep it totally free without losing money.

A few notes before we get this show on the road; When I type "the forum" in this fanzine I am referring to OUYAForum.com. Oh and I have no proofreader on board and english isn't my first language so there might be some errors here and there throughout the fanzine, but I'm hoping you can see past that.

Enough chit chat, let's get to it!

- Starfighter

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OUYA E3

This year OUYA is finally inside of the walls of E3 instead of in the parking lot. Together with IndieCade they will be showing off a handful of “exclusives” (although I know for sure a few of them will be on several platforms so... I don’t know...) and they will be at a proper booth in what is known as the South Hall.

Gamers are invited to hang out and play games together with developers and OUYAns alike. On their website we can see the following list over games they will be showing off during the expo:

Amazing Frog? (Fayju)
Duck Game (Landon Podbielski)
Hidden in Plain Sight (Adam Spragg Games)
Knight & Damsel (mkultragames)
Luxuria Superbia (Tale of Tales)
Magnetic By Nature (Team Tripleslash)
MirrorMoon EP (Santa Ragione)
Neverending Nightmares (Infinitap Games)
Potatoman Seeks the Troof (Pixeljam)
Read Only Memories (Midboss)
Reagan Gorbachev (Team2Bit)
So Many Me (Extend Interactive)
Thralled (Thralled Team)
Toto Temple Deluxe (Juicy Beast)
Whispering Willows (Night Light Interactive)
VVVVVV (Terry Cavanagh)

Thralled / Thralled Team

Neverending Nightmares / Infinitap Games

As you can see they throw games all around them and many of the titles are favorites of mine, such as the brilliant multiplayer game Hidden in Plain Sight, the very special experience Luxuria Superbia, the upcoming psychological horror game Neverending Nightmares and of course Thralled. The last one being (together with That Dragon, Cancer and Neverending Nightmares) my most anticipated game for the OUYA at this point.

I was rather looking forward to seeing OUYA in the parking lot this year too, because honestly, the E3 isn't the optimal place for OUYA. E3 is about this whole other thing which is pretty lame when you think about it. Forum member arcticdog said it pretty well:

"In the past few months though, I've sort of come to the personal conclusion that E3 really isn't the place for OUYA.

You don't see Apple there. You don't see Google there. Gamestick isn't there. Bluestacks isn't there. Amazon isn't there to show off Fire TV.
Madcatz is there, so OUYA Everywhere might get a footnote presence if they're promoting MOJO, or maybe Madcatz will have an OUYA-specific spokesperson in their booth if there's a need for it.

I guess the point is... E3 panders to a very specific demographic. Both inside the industry and to their crowd of "go big or go home" end users. OUYA's not any more noteworthy to them than Google Play is."

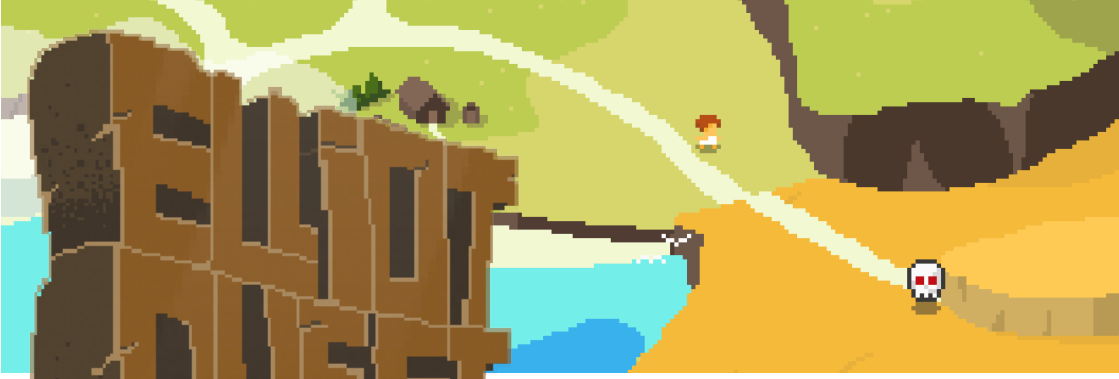
Anyway, I can't participate but I wish the OUYA representatives nothing but luck and that the developers and gamers will have a nice time together. Let's show them the core of gaming. The fun. The possibilities! The love!

Nowhere

Title: Nowhere
Developer: Darkpath(?)

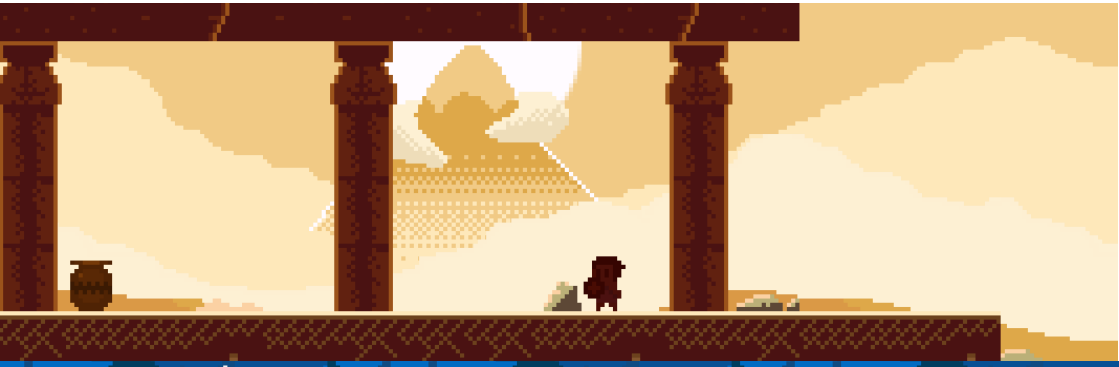
Where am I? How did I end up here? Why am I so utterly alone? What happened here?

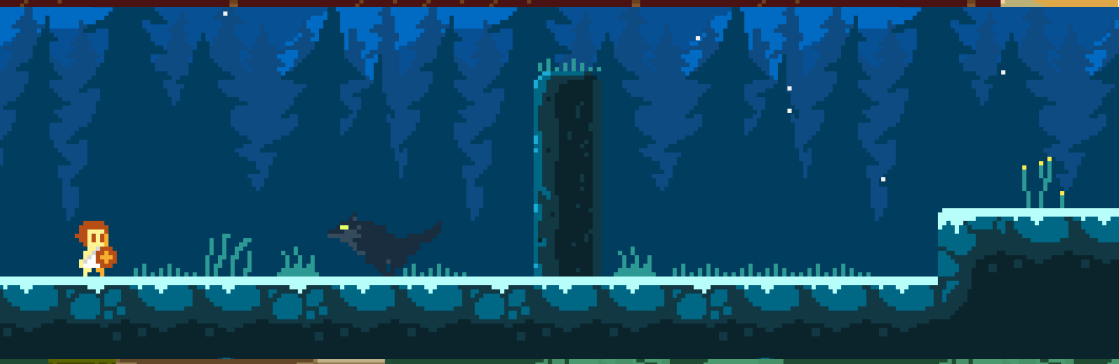
These are all questions that just work for me, as a solid ground for an exploration game with hints of horror. Just by looking at the screenshots I immediately understand what eerie atmosphere the game has to offer and I can't underline my longing for this game enough. I heard the developer currently is working on the pretty low framerate. Do I dare to hope for 60?

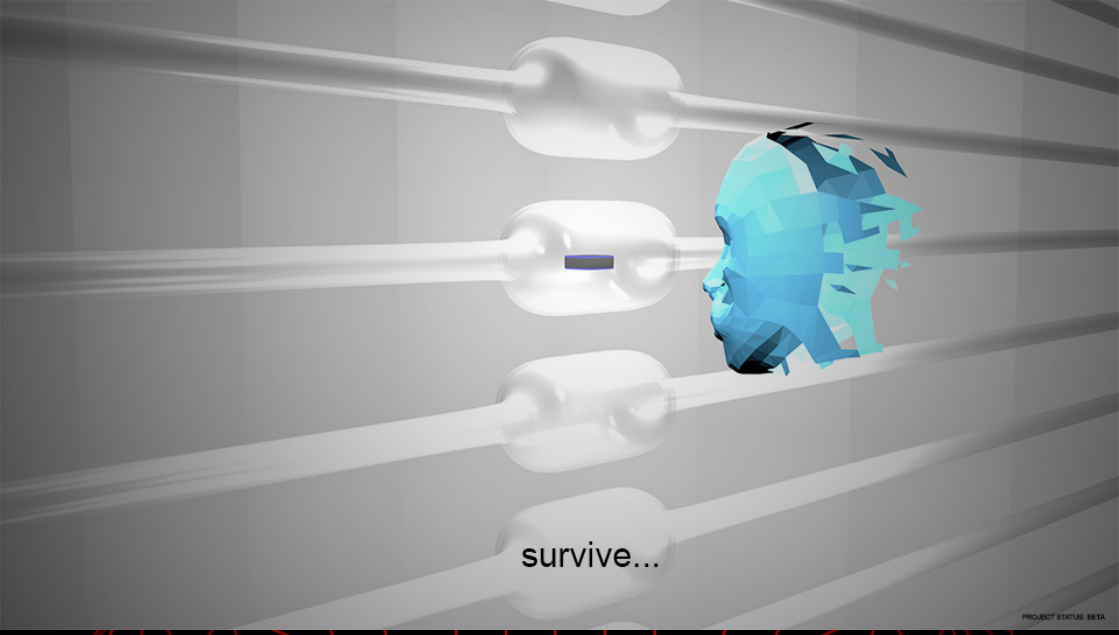


Title: Elliot Quest
Developer: Ansimuz

Elliot Quest looks exactly like what Ansimuz said when pitching it - a Metroidvania-Zelda adventure. I'll let the screenshots speak for themselves. <3







Title: BoxByte
Developer: Iris Studios

All we knew was “(new system.Universe( )).Go(0x426f7842797465);”. That, together with an intriguing screen(shot?) made all the difference in the world. Clever marketing or pompous drivel? I think the former.

Later revealed to be BoxByte, a new indie game project from Iris Studios, it will be showing off its goods at the ScrewAttack Gaming Convention this summer (11-13th July). Are you ready to... I don’t know... Survive?

SO MANY ME

Title: So Many Me
Developer: Extend Studio

So Many Me takes on the very fun genre of puzzle platforming, with new twists and turns. I don't think I've ever seen some of the mechanics before so that's very exciting. Basically you are many identical characters that can take on different abilities and act as solutions to different puzzles accordingly. The graphics are so cute it'll make your heart talk in baby language.

Now if they just nail the controls and framerate on the OUYA version (because yes, So Many Me is also coming to other platforms such as Windows, Mac and Linux) I'm sure this will be one of the big ones!

Title: Gene Effect
Developer: Lightstorm3D
Price: $6.99
Size: 132.42 MB
Version: 1.3.4

In a near future human kind has learned to exploit other planets with small mining robots - one of which disappears. The player takes the role of a robot and embarks on a rescue mission that soon evolves into something much larger.

Mazes with atmosphere
The gameplay in *Gene Effect* is very similar to *Hero of Many*. You slowly navigate through mazes filled to the brim with great visuals and an awesome atmosphere. As the little robot, depicted above, you get to explore many areas that contains minerals, plants, fossils and even an enemy or two. There's often a time limit and certain goals to be met and when the area is cleared your progress is analyzed and rated - which makes for great replay value. Don't be fooled though, collectables, life pods and other important items are in a different place every time an area is loaded so there's no chance to perfectly memorize your path.

A quality game
There's plenty of areas to explore and many paths to take which, together with the graphics, makes for a genuine feeling of quality. It's a good bang-for-buck game that leaves me with a smile on my face. Don't believe me? Fire up your engine and descend down the darkness. You'll see.

Title: Twin Tiger Shark
Developer: Wide Pixel Games
Price: Free
Size: 16.19 MB
Version: 1.82

Another gem from the swedish developer that gave us *Heavy Recoil: Convoy Chase* and *X S.E.E.D.* What we have in front of us is a Toaplan inspired shoot 'em up concisting of six loopable stages of pure nostalgia. From the game mechanics down to the very last pixel on screen it's love and care all over.

Easy at first
At first the game might feel a bit too easy, even for the moderate player, and the stages tend to drag on forever. This is however a part of the charm. Percistance, concentration and a slowly increasing difficulty makes for a lengthy and wonderful game that doesn't seem to ever become boring or stale once you understand the pacing.

Seasoned shoot 'em up players will probably find this game way too easy, I'm sure they've already looped it fifteen times over on one credit (there are no continues in Twin Tiger Shark, oldschool style) - but since I'm not one of them I can thoroughly enjoy this game for hours and hours.

The mechanics
There are three main weapons to choose from and level up through collecting power-ups dropped from certain enemies. Once fully powered up all the weapon types have their strengths and all are fun to use. Maybe a bit on the traditional side but that is also very much a strong point of Twin Tiger Shark. The enemies also drop golden items that generate important points. To top it all off the 'bomb' in this game is a brigade of friendlies swooping in from behind, aiding the player a brief moment.

Multiplatform
It performs wonderfully on Ouya with silky smooth scrolling and no irritating flickering (yes, I'm looking at you, *Raiden Legacy*). The online scoreboard joins all platforms (Ouya, Xbox 360 and PC) and notes which score is on which - so everyone can compete no matter what machine they use. I would have liked the option to view only scores from a certain platform though, as I'm more interested in Ouya players, and their frequency, right now.

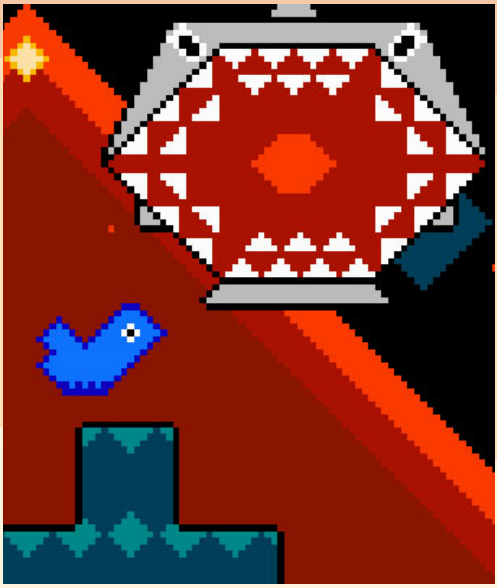
So, should you get Twin Tiger Shark? Yes. It is a very pretty, oldschool shoot 'em up that will hit the spot with most arcade- and shoot 'em up fans. For me it's a no-brainer. It's one of my absolute favorite shooters on Ouya as of today.

Title: SHAARK!
Developer: Rusty Moyher
Price: Free
Size: 12.3 MB
Version: 1.0

Here's a school book example of a game that is easy to pick up and just play and have fun doing so. Its beautifully minimalistic visuals really hits the spot and the bird looks heartmeltingly cute with its head bobbing along while moving. But don't get too comfortable, a small bird is never really safe.

In the depths of the sea
The objective of the game is to traverse a series of islands and collect increasingly tricky placed fruits. Sounds easy, right? Well, the name of the game isn't for nothing. There is a hungry shark in the sea below that won't give up until it is feasting on your delicious flesh. It has more teeth than I care to count and sometimes it's got company.

You can double jump a set amount of times, although I think it should be called "flying" in this context, and you really have to plan every move in the later stages of the game. Fruits are just barely reachable and the sharks can be pretty relentless.



Short but sweet
It doesn't take many minutes to play through SHAARK! but I don't mind. It is a quick fix of pretty pixels, nice music and elegant platform jumping - for the very attractive price of... well, nothing. It is one of those free games that I really can't work out why they are free. I would absolutely pay a dollar or two to be able to add this little gem to my ever growing collection of must have OUYA games.

Title: Super Killer Hornet Resurrection
Developer: Flump Studios
Price: $1.99
Size: 82.43 MB
Version: 1.0

I am not particularly keen of shoot 'em ups with forced gimmicky mechanics that just works against the fun. There are, of course, a few exceptions such as the grapple hook in Trigger Heart Exelica and the flip mechanic in Espgaluda and the similar flip mechanic in Ikaruga. But on the whole, I like my shooters pretty much straight forward. Dodge bullets, score points from blowing stuff up and have a blast. With Super Killer Hornet - all that goes out the window.

Brilliant combination
I love math and I love shoot 'em ups. To mix them was nothing I would have thought of myself, but Flump Studios did. Every now and then a number falls down the screen. Collect it and wait for a second number to fall down, attached to +, - or x. Then you have something that can be calculated. Soon three different sums falls down - one of which is the correct answer. The more correct answers in a row the greater the reward. And don't forget that it's still a proper shoot 'em up, with lots of bullet dodging and bossfights.

It can get a bit hectic at times but it always feels manageable. The math isn't in the way of the gameplay, it's a natural part of the challenge. They made a huge improvement from the first game to the sequal, with interesting scrolling backdrops, interesting bosses and all that goodness you'd expect from a solid shooter.

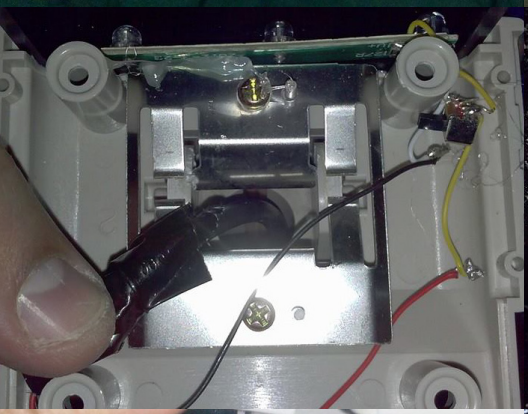
Respectable effort
While it isn't quite on par with the greatest titles out there, it's very unique and entertaining. It feels like Flump Studios had fun making this game, and I really have fun playing it. Respect.

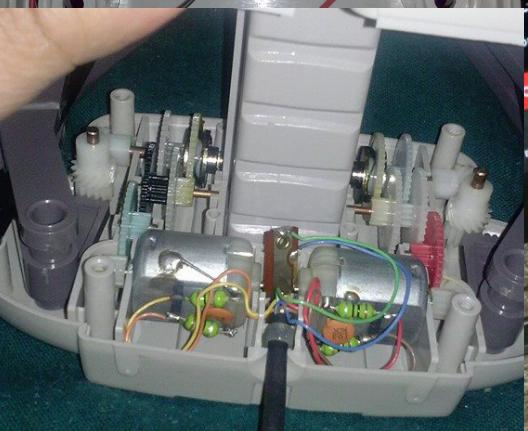
A SNES OUYA

We have Cannibalpinhead to thank for bringing this cup of awesome to our table. It's an OUYA disguised as a Super Nintendo. Controller support, USB stick and a working power switch. In the later pictures we see how the USB stick got a clever placement for easy access.

OU-ROB

ROB wasn't Nintendos strongest moment, but he left a big footprint in all of our hearts it seems. The OUYA Mod community has embraced the little guy and made this amazing creation. But as someone said, it's too bad it wasn't called the ROB-YA.





A true gamer's controller: The disconnect

I navigate into OUYA's official website. A site I actually quite like. It could use some improvements, of course, but overall it's not as bad as you would think when you learn they fired their webdesigners. Anyway, I click on Shop to see if anything new has appeared. And then I see it.

Next to the picture of the controller it says "A true gamer's controller". But... wait... what? Sure, I really love the feel of the controller in all possible ways, but that's about it.

The d-pad is okay at best, the facebuttons are loud and feel cheap, the sticks have a questionable deadzone even in the best of optimized games and the triggers are more often than not extremely squeaky to the point where I had to take it apart and lubricate with silicone spray to not go insane. It constantly loses connection with the console for a few microseconds up to a full few seconds, making it impossible to play any sort of precision demanding games (*cough* shoot 'em ups *cough*).

I have tried it all, I put my console on its side, I sat no more than a feet or two away from my setup, I always make sure bluetooth is the top priority even though I'm almost always on ethernet, and I constantly change batteries to ensure they are completely fresh. But to no avail. It just doesn't work properly. And while I do understand that it is a ongoing work in progress it really rubs me the wrong way to read "a true gamer's controller" next to it. I would never, *ever*, recommend the OUYA controller - as it stands today - over any other in terms of reliability.

I haven't had the opportunity to try the new iteration that came with the black edition of OUYA since I have no money, but I really hope the issues are fixed in that one. Because the day the controller works as good as it feels, it will truly be a "true gamer's controller". Right now it feels like empty words.

Top 10: Free games

10	Skyriders
9	Motrya
8	Fenix Box
7	Maldita Castilla
6	Twin Tiger Shark
5	Jack ‘N Jill
4	Endless Forms Most Beautiful
3	Gaurodan
2	Antichromatic
1	Bosses Forever 2.Bro

"WON'T SOMEBODY *PLEASE* THINK OF THE INDUSTRY?!"

I often read things like this:

"If you like something, it's only natural to care about it's development."

"If you like games, you should care about the gaming industry as a whole."

While I agree with the first, I don't agree with the second. I have been gaming since the 80s, I grew up with games, I had more games than friends, I browsed toy catalogs for games to wish for from Santa, I spend more than four hours a day in front of a screen playing some sort of game. I have entered (and won) tournaments, attended conventions. I have even tried to make a few games of my own (neither was very good or came past the stage of "jumping around looking at stuff"). Video games are, in short, a big part of my life. Yet, I still don't care about the industry. Why is this?

Us against them

Well, for one - I don't feel the unity I feel in other parts of my life. I am somewhat involved in a punk scene where I support small bands by going to their shows, buying their demos and hanging out with them in general. In gaming, I can probably feel the same about indie developers, but the big companies? No thank you. They are, like the music industry, a pure profit driven generic mess. They are managing a brand, maximizing sales and calculate what to say.

Change

I don't like when indie developers get bought by larger companies no more than I like when punk bands signs onto big labels. Sure, they can reach a larger audience, but their content will be compromised along the way. I care only about one thing - change. The old ways has to go, and joining them isn't the solution. In the same vein I don't really want OUYA to be accepted into the big rooms, because the big rooms aren't a healthy environment for creativity.

No economy expert

So when the inevitable discussions about video game companies emerge I never really join in. Why on earth should I care about a company trying to make money no matter what? Why should I identify my complex self with a simple brand? I'm no economy expert. I'm no big investor. I'm a dirty punk who's lost belief in the system and want to see *true*, ground up, change.

What did you think?

OUYAForum.com
Starfighter